

Cost of living emergency
– workers need a raise!

INCREASE PAY NOT PROFITS!

BILLS

WAGES

Straight after the worst of the pandemic we are faced with a new crisis. Prices are shooting up – on food, fuel, rent, electricity and gas. Working-class people are faced with a 'cost-of-surviving' crisis.

Many are forced to make cruel choices on what food they can or can't buy, or what bills they can or can't pay. A recent survey conducted by Barnardos found that 10% of parents have to skip meals to feed children.

Meagre wage increases are falling way below these galloping price hikes, resulting in a drop in our living standards. Shamefully, the Government in January raised the already paltry minimum wage by a pitiful 2.9%, while the inflation rate was 5.5%. This amounts to a policy of cutting the income of the lowest paid workers.

This is happening throughout the economy. There is nothing inevitable about rising prices – they are not caused by rises in wages or state supports, as some economists make out. They are caused by bosses refusing to take a hit to their profits. So we – the working majority – pay more while the rich get richer.

While workers suffer, big companies & landlords make fortunes:

- Last year, energy companies implemented 35 hikes in gas and electricity. In April, Bord Gáis will increase the price of electricity and gas by 27% and 39% respectively. This will add €700 to the annual bill of an average family.
- This is a company that has made profits of €70 million in the last two years, and its parent company in the UK, Centrica, made a profit of £948 million last year. The ESB made record profits of €679 million in 2021.
- In the next 12 months, the average family will face a price hike of €780 in their shopping bill. Yet Supermarkets have made massive profits during the pandemic. In 2020, Aldi alone increased profits by 46% to €71.2 million.
- The 20% of the population who rent are seeing their living standards undermined by further rent rises. In the last three months of 2021, rents were 10% higher than they were in the same period as 2020. Yet the government took the criminal decision to get rid of the rent freeze.



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We won't pay for their crisis – what we need:

It's an outrage that landlords, energy companies and supermarkets are allowed to profit from this crisis – it must end now. There are many things that can be done to ease the burden on workers and young people – it just involves transferring wealth from the super-rich and big business to working-class people.

- During the pandemic nine billionaires in Ireland increased their wealth by €18.3 billion. They now have a combined wealth of €48 billion. Big businesses in Ireland made €203.8 billion in profits in 2020, an increase of €8.5 billion.
- We must now demand an emergency tax on this wealth to fund a one-off payment of €2,000 to all households in the state.
- We need a price freeze on energy, fuel and groceries to stop the spiral in prices.
- Electricity bills could be slashed if the energy companies were run on a not-for-profit or break-even basis, starting with the ESB which is owned by the state. All energy companies should be brought into democratic public ownership, and we must fast track the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy.
- We need a €15 an hour minimum wage, one that should be increased with a rise in the cost of living. Trade unions must use the power of their 500,000 members and organise all workers to demand double digit pay increases.
- We need to cut and freeze rents at affordable levels. Restore social welfare payments to €350 per week.
- We need a publicly-run scheme of free and quality childcare, because for many families the cost of childcare is like a second mortgage.
- We need to make public transport free and accessible to all! That means investing in an expansive, reliable public transport system – of buses, trams and trains – throughout the country. This is also an essential environmental measure.

We can win real change

The pandemic showed that emergency measures can be taken when the need is there, and it's there now for working-class people trying to make ends meet. But to win these demands we need to organise, as communities and workers, including in our trade unions, to build a movement from below that can force the government to act.

The pandemic also showed starkly that it is workers who are essential to the running of society – not the millionaire and billionaire bosses and their cronies in the media and political establishment.

Their capitalist system is killing our planet and producing unprecedented wealth inequality. It is also fueling wars, as we're seeing with the bloodshed in Ukraine and Yemen.

We need to break with this system – by organising the economy on the basis of democratic planning by workers and communities, not on the chaos of the market. This means taking the key sections of the economy – the major industries, resources and wealth – into public ownership, and planning their use to meet the needs of all.

If you agree then, join us today.

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SHOULD BE
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THE PEOPLE

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